In administrative skill. In many scholars, too, there were fostered an intellectual arrogance, a narrowness of^outlook, and a stereotyping of"thought which discouraged~ail progress. Other weaknesses "not necessarily inherent in the procedure frequently accompaiiiedTlT Tn spite of elaborately devised safeguards, some men cheated, undetected, or bribed the readers of the~ papers. From the Sui. through the Ch'ing, sons of high officials could enter the_ bureaucracy either without meeting the ordeal of the examinations or by passing tests which were much easier than those required of others. The right to use the title of the lower degrees was sold by the government, especially in the years of the decadence of the Ch'ing.

Yet over and beyond the weaknesses were values which the foreign observer might easily miss. Even in the worst years of the dynasty only a small minority of the degrees were obtained fraudulently. Titles which had been bought were popularly not regarded so highly as those acquired by merit. The competition was so exacting that as a rule success went only to men of more than average mental ability and capacity for concentrated application. Possession of the degrees and of a position in the hierarchy was the most coveted honor in the Empire. The examinations, then, probably brought into the service of society through the state many of the really able men of the country.

Even more important was the promotion of cultural unity. All civil officials had passed through the same training in the literature which set forth the ideals of the Confucian school. Not only officials but the thousands of disappointed aspirants, many times as numerous as the successful, had been subjected to the same

regimen. Since the entire formal education of the country was dominated by the purpose of preparing men for the civil service tests and drew its teachers from the ranks of those who had been in training for them, many thousands who had never proceeded far enough with their studies to compete in the examinations had at least a smattering of the standard learning. The educated class trained in this uniform fashion enjoyed a prestige probably greater than that accorded to scholars in any other nation: they dominated society. Their ideals and manners were, accordingly, largely taken over by the masses and tended tg permeate the entire nation. The Confucian dream of a society molded by the example